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MASQUERADERS;
OR
FATAL CURIOSITY;

BEING

The *Secret History* of a Late
AMOUR.

*When Love once pleads Admission to our Hearts,
(In spite of all the Virtue we can boast)
The Woman that deliberates, is lost.*

ADDISON'S Cato.



L O N D O N;

Printed for J. ROBERTS, near the Oxford-Arms
in Warwick-Lane. M.DCC.XXIV. April.
(Price one Shilling.)

THE
MASSOUEADERS;
W. Musgrave!
FATAL CURIOSITY;

BEING
The Secret History of a Late
AMOUR.

When Love once sheds Admission to our Hearts,
The Rights of all the Virtues are destroyed;
The Woman that solicits, is lost.
A Woman's Care.



L O N D O N
Printed for J. Knapton, near the Old Bailey,
in Strand-Lane, at the Sign of the Ship.
(Under one Shilling)



To the Right Honourable

Col. *S T A N L Y*,

One of his M A J E S T Y's
Privy-Council of the
Kingdom of *Ireland*.

S I R,



*V*ARIOUS are the
Views which Authors
have in Addresses of
this Nature; and con-
sidering the Disposition
of the present Age, and the Scar-
city of Worth to countenance those

extravagant Encomiums in fashion among Dedicators, many must be extreamly at a loss for even the shadow of an Excuse for making them.—How will therefore the less Fortunate envy my happy Choice of a Patron, where I have nothing to fear, nothing to regret, but my own Inability of praising as I ought?

To be spoke well of by all, is to be a Prodigy which I know not if History affords us one Example of: The over-spreading Wings of foul Detraction reach from the Cottage to the Throne, and shed a Venom almost Universal; but You, Sir! are an Exception to this general Rule: and tho' there are but few, too few, who imitate your Virtues, there are yet fewer who wish they were less.—The Reason of this is obvious

obvious, and needs not an Explanation: You have Perfections too necessary to the Interest of the World, not to render the Person possess'd of them admir'd, and lov'd.—That uncommon Beneficence of Nature, that soft Commiseration which induces you to make the Woes of all Mankind your own, (with this difference alone, that you are more zealous for the Redress of others Grievances, than you wou'd be if inflicted on your self) takes away all possibility of becoming your Enemy, without being as much so to one's own Interest, as one should be to Justice. If to be a loyal Subject, a firm and worthy Patriot, a Father to the Orphan, a Dryer of the Widows Tears, a Friend without design, and a Reliever in general of all those Oppressions which reach your Ear; if, I say, to merit such a Character, be to be dear and valuable

valuable to the World, it is not to be wonder'd at, that you should never be mention'd but with Veneration, nor thought of but with the highest Regard.

But in the midst of that Pleasure, which the Contemplation of all, who are so happy as to know you must afford, there arises also a melancholy Reflection, that when we shall have the Misfortune of losing you, there springs no second Phoenix from your Ashes. How vast a mitigation of our Sorrows wou'd it be, did you leave us a Son, the Inheriter of his Father's Virtues: I dare not mention those Graces which might be expected to have been his Portion from the other side, else, for the glory of my Sex, should gladly touch, as far as my weak Pen wou'd give me leave, on some of those many
 excellent

(vii)

*excellent Qualities, which render'd
her the Pride and Ornament of it;
but she now shines in a sublimer
Sphere, the Companion of Angels,
the Delight of those above, as she
was the most eminent Pattern of
Perfection here: And to remind you
of so irreparable a Loss, wou'd be
far from answering the End which
the Trifle, I take the liberty of
presenting you with, was design'd for.
I shall therefore add no more, than
that I am, with the greatest Respect,*

SIR,

Your most Oblig'd,

Most Faithful, and

Most Obedient,

Humble Servant.

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her the Pride and Ornament of it;
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THE
MASQUERADERS,

O R,
FATAL CURIOSITY.



GR EAT BRITAIN has no Assembly which affords such variety of Characters as the MASQUERADE; there are scarce any Degrees of People, of what Religion or Principle soever, that some time or other are not willing to embrace an opportunity of partaking this Diversion. But among the number of those who pretty often frequented it, was a Gentleman, whose real Name, for some reasons, I shall conceal under that of DORIMENUS: He is young, handsome, gay, gallant, has an affluence of Fortune and of Wit, is a passionate Lover of Intrigue, and 'tis not to be doubted but that with all these Accomplishments, he found a great
 B many

many among the Fair Sex to encourage that disposition : He seldom went there without his appointment, and it often hapned that three or four Ladies would give him a description of their Habits, each in hope to be the Favourite She, which should that night be singled out, and triumph o'er the rest in his distinguish'd Addresses. This Ambition was sometimes the occasion of a good deal of confusion in his Amours, the jealous watchfulness of one would frequently deprive him of his pleasures with another. He was never without Embarrassments of that nature : It took up great part of his time in reading, and answering the Reproaches and Complaints he daily received from those who thought themselves slighted ; and if his Thoughts and Pen had not been equally swift, he would soon have had no leisure for new Attacks.

By a very great chance, one evening he went, entirely disingaged, to this Scene of Gallantry ; but *Fortune*, who seemed glad of this opportunity to get the start of *Love*, threw an Adventure in his way, which at his coming there he little thought of. A fine Shepherdess whose Bon Mien had attracted the eyes and addresses of a great number of the Assembly, either thro' being too strait lac'd, or the extreme heat of the place, for there was a great deal of company that night, was so overcome, that she fell down in a fainting Fit in the midst of a croud of Gentlemen, who had gathered round her : DORIMEMUS was among them, and was one of the first that endeavoured to bring her to herself. He was too well acquainted with the Sex, to be a stranger to Vapours, Spleen, and those other fashionable Distempers, which are often of great service
to

to make a Woman be taken notice of, when nothing in her beside is found worthy of observation, and was provided with a Bottle of Spirits in his pocket : Her Mask must be now taken off to give her air, and tho' by this time the accident had drawn Nuns, Gypsies, Queens, and a confus'd medley of all Conditions and Professions to her assistance ; it was to his efforts she was indebted for so speedily recovering. It was he who had the honour of holding her in his Arms, during that little deprivation of Sense ! It was he who had the pleasure of perceiving her returns of Life, and catching the first Sigh which issued from the struggling Soul !—'Tis difficult to determine, whether, at the first plucking off her Mask, the sight of her Face gave greater Motives of uneasiness to the Men or the Women which were about her ; those only who have experienced what it is to love or envy, can be judges what kind of pains the one felt in a hopeless Desire, or the other in seeing themselves so far out-rivall'd. Nature never form'd Features more compleatly lovely than those of this Fair indisposed,——all the Graces seem'd assembled in her Countenance,——a thousand dimpled Charms play'd round her lovely Mouth,——a thousand little Loves laugh'd in her shining Eyes,——the Delicacy of her Complexion exceeded all comparison,——her Neck, her Breasts, her fine-proportion'd Hands and Arms,——there was no part of her expos'd to view, that did not discover a Beauty peculiar to itself.——The little Confusion and those modest Blushes which attended it, added somewhat to the Lustre of her native Charms ; she thank'd all those who had been aiding to her recovery, with a Voice so full

of Harmony, and a Look so sweetly innocent, that it had a wonderful effect on all ; but DORIMENUS, whose Heart was easily set on fire by the sight of the least kindling Beauty, cou'd not behold Perfection, such as hers, without feeling an excess of that Passion it was created to inspire ;—former Successes gave him a greater boldness than is ordinarily the consequence of Love.—He was too well acquainted with his own Power of pleasing, to suffer thro' a fear to offend ; and while the others bow'd and retir'd at a becoming distance, that she might have leave to recover those Disorders, which her late Swoon, and the Shame for being so surpriz'd, had thrown her in ; he still continued holding her in his Arms, excusing himself for doing so, by telling her he fear'd she was not yet perfectly well, and that he cou'd not consent to leave her without support, 'till he was assur'd she was entirely past danger of a Relapse. The Poet says,

*In Love there is a Time,
When dull Obedience is the greatest Crime.*

Tho' this Lady entreated and struggled to get loose, he easily read in her Eyes, those infallible Betrayers of the Heart, that he did not disoblige her in refusing her Request : He entertain'd her with so much Wit and Gallantry, and the appearance of so violent a Passion, that she, who was by nature pretty amorous, and easy to receive an impression, cou'd not fail a susceptibility of Charms, which there are very few in the world to equalize. She had often heard of DORIMENUS, had seen him at a distance, and 'tis probable wish'd to be address'd by him in the manner

manner she now was: She had not artifice enough to disguise the pleasure she took in his Conversation, from a Penetration so nice, and so experienced as his. He made his advantage of those Glances which she could not restrain, and desirous of being inform'd of what Character and Circumstances she was, made use of all his Eloquence to persuade her to permit him to accompany her home: had she had any real Scruples to oppose what he requested, he had Wit enough to find Arguments against them; but as she had none but such as were inspir'd only by a fear of appearing too free, and consequently but faintly urged, was not long before she suffer'd herself to be prevail'd on, to grant what perhaps she wish'd with no less Ardency than him who ask'd it. Two Chairs were immediately call'd, and he had the Satisfaction of *publickly* triumphing o'er a Number who wish'd to be in his place, as in his own Thoughts he doubted not of doing so in *private* over all those Scruples, Virtue, Fear, or Honour, might raise in her Breast to the prejudice of his Desire.

Being come to her House, (which was a very handsome and well-furnish'd one) the Obligations she lay under for the care he had taken of her, serv'd as an excuse for the extraordinary Reception she gave him. — There was nothing the Season afforded of rich, and rare, but she order'd for his Entertainment; and he easily had the Address to draw from her in Conversation so much of her Affairs, as to know she was a Widow, and liv'd wholly independent on the Favour of any Relation whatever. — This Information not a little pleas'd him, there was no danger of any Father or Husband to interpose
between

between him and his Designs ;——all he had to apprehend, was, that as they both were single, she might expect that were he really possess'd of that Passion he would have her believe, he would make Overtures of a different nature to those he ever had done to any, and which, as lovely as he thought her, were no way agreeable to his Humour.——As he was perfectly acquainted with the World, and in particular with the Foibles, Passions, and Inadvertencies of the Fair Sex ; he thought the surest Method of succeeding in such a Case, was not to give her time for Reflection. He therefore press'd her with all those soft undoing Insinuations : those melting Tendernesses, those seducing Arts which Desire never fails to instruct.——Few Men, how dull and stupid soever they appear in other things, but have Artifice enough this way :——But DORIMENUS, as he had a share of Wit infinitely superiour to most of his Sex, so he had also a Face and Person which render'd the Blandishments he made use of more graceful and persuasive : All Eyes become not Love ; some, instead of the impressive Languishment they would assume, degenerate into a heavy Dullness, rather forbidding, than exciting the Passion they would raise ; but his, whatever Air they wore, were always charming !——whether the gay Delights of Hope revell'd in their Glances, or trembling Doubt aw'd their contracted Fires in down-cast Languishment !——whether they seem'd to triumph or beseech, they were enchanting still !——every kind of Look transporting !

Vast was their Power, and numberless the Conquests they had gain'd !——DALINDA, (for so shall I call the present Victim of their force) had

had not Arguments sufficient to confute the
Strenuousness of those he urg'd, and even Reason
seem'd to take the part of Love. — In
fine, that very Night he compleated his Con-
quest, and got possession of all the Joys the
glorious Prize could give. — The God of ten-
der Inspirations with pleasure beheld the Sa-
crifice was made him, and blest the amorous
Pair with doubled Vigour, and uncommon
Rapture. — The happy DORIMENUS confess'd a
Transport beyond what he e'er felt before, and
the unrepenting Fair avow'd her lovely Con-
queror's unequal'd extent of charming.

Both were so highly satisfied with each other,
that I know no way to make the Reader so
truly sensible of it, as to repeat a few Lines
which DORIMENUS, who at some times was very
poetically inclin'd, writ on the Transactions of
this Night, and happen'd a few days after to
show to some of his Friends, which to the best
of my Remembrance run thus:

*An amorous Pair with mutual Warmth inspir'd,
Alike desiring, and alike desir'd,
Clasp'd in each other's Arms, resolv'd to know
Th' extremest Bliss which Nature can bestow:
Love made the Banquet, each a hungry Guest,
With greediness devour'd the luscious Feast!
While their full Eyes with Extasy ran o'er,
Enjoying all, yet craving still for more!
Joys too sublime for Language to express,
And which even Thought itself must render less.*

'Tis certain that for a time they had for each
other, Charms which they imagin'd were not
to be found elsewhere; she really doated on him
with

with a Transcendency of Passion, and he, tho' ever accounted the most roving and inconstant of his Sex, prefer'd the Conquest of her Heart to all the others he had made, not only because it was the last ; but also that when he consulted his Judgment, he knew of none that had the thousandth part of her Merit ; —for some Months he devoted himself entirely to her, and in all probability she might much longer have continu'd the reigning Mistress of his Soul, had she not herself been accessary to her own Misfortune, by a Mismanagement, which those who love, as she did, to Madness, can hardly avoid falling into. — There is nothing in the world more difficult than to forbear talking of that on which our Thoughts are continually employ'd ; and as the Idea of her belov'd DORIMENUS was never from her Mind, no Conversation was pleasing in which he had not a part. — Whatever Company she happen'd to be in, she always found some pretence to make him the Theme of her Discourse, and even among those who were the greatest Strangers to him, would invent some way to introduce his Name. — But all this fell short of the Satisfaction she wanted : — Her Soul, full of his Charms, wild 'twixt Desire and Transport, could not contain the vast Excess. — She long'd to impart the mighty Bliss ; she panted, to pour out the overwhelming Transport.

PHILECTA, a young Lady, on whose Wit, Generosity, and Good-nature she had an entire dependence, was the Person she made choice of to be intrusted with the dear burthen of this Secret ; and while she related to her the particulars of her Happiness, felt in the delicious Re-
pre-

presentation a Pleasure, perhaps, not much inferior to that which the Reality afforded.— Having brought herself to make this Confidence, she no sooner parted from his Embraces, than she flew to her fair Friend, gave her the whole History of what had pass'd between them—repeated every tender Word he spoke—not the least fond Endearment was forgot—describ'd his Looks—his melting Pressures—his Ardours ! —his Impatiencies ! —his Extasies ! —his Languishments ! —endeavour'd to make her sensible how different he was from other Lovers !—how much beyond his Sex !—with what a God-like Sublimity of Passion he ador'd her !—and, what was more prodigious than the rest, assured her, that each Enjoyment but encreased Desire.

PHILECTA, who had herself suffered much by Love, and the Ingratitude of a Man who had deceiv'd her with Professions of much the same nature with those her Friend seem'd now so certain were sincere, listen'd to her at first only with Compassion, not doubting but that in a very little time she should hear from her as many Expressions of Complaint as now she did of Rapture.—But Pity wearing off, by being at length brought to believe 'twas needless ; a different Passion rose in its stead : she began to envy the Happiness of her Friend—since her own Deception, she had not believ'd there was such a thing as Constancy in Man, would never encourage any Addressee that were offer'd her—had retir'd herself from Company ; and having with a vast deal of Pain, at last, set free her Mind from a Passion which had been so destructive to her Peace, despis'd

the Effects she saw of it in others.——But now to hear daily those luscious Descriptions of continued Ardours——to read his Letters, and to find that still the last was more endearing than the former, gave her, as she imagined, sufficient Reason to complain of the Severity of her own Fate, which permitted her not to have known those Joys which arise from the Proof of reciprocal Affection.

She had never seen DORIMENUS, but was perfectly well acquainted with his Character, and was therefore the more surpris'd that a Man whom all the World talk'd of as the handsomest, wittiest, and most inconstant of his Sex, should now confine himself to one who in her Opinion was far from meriting it from him——DALINDA indeed (would she cry to herself) has Beauty, but there are other Women as agreeable in their Persons, and infinitely more so in their Conversation, that have not met with so grateful a Return.——I cannot think what he sees in her,——she has nothing but a Face to recommend her,——she has no Wit,——every thing she says is trifling——all her Notions are poor and insignificant——and I am certain has not Delicacy enough of Soul to be capable to any degree of that Passion she seems so fond of professing.——She may *like*, but 'tis impossible she should *love*.

It was not that PHILECTA was naturally addicted to Detraction, or that she had too good an opinion of her own Merits not to think favourably of those of another; for excepting the Beauty of her Person, she was in reality every way superior to DALINDA, and inferring from that Judgment that DORIMENUS look'd no far-

farther than the exterior Part, could not believe him a Man of that Nicety she had heard him fam'd for.——When she reflected on his manner of writing, she was convinced he had an uncommon share of Wit: but then, when she consider'd how little the other was capable of answering his Letters, she knew not how he could reconcile to his good Sense the sending them.

The Arguments she made use of for and against him in her Mind, rais'd at length a prodigious desire to entertain him: she fancied that if she had an opportunity of talking to him half an hour, she should be able to form a more exact Judgment of his Sentiments, and Humour, than all she could gather from Description. She told DALINDA she had a Curiosity of seeing her Lover, and desir'd she might be admitted to come, as by Accident, to visit her some day when he was with her; but as indifferent an opinion as she had of this Lady's Understanding, she found it not so easy to prevail on her to grant this Request, as she had imagined: In spite of that Knowledge most Women have of their own Perfection, she doubted their Force in the presence of one who had so many, tho' of a different Sort from those she was mistress of.

If PHILECTA had a less delicate Complexion or Features not altogether cast in so fine a Mould, there was something so irresistibly engaging in her Eyes, as well supplied all other wants; besides she had a Shape the most exquisite that could be, and was the Genteelest Woman in the World:——then for her Conversation, it was such, that there was scarce a Possi-

bility of quitting it without a wish to re-enjoy.—All these Charms consider'd, the other must have been more weak than she was thought to be, if she had introduced the Person possessed of them to the Man she lov'd, and who she was sensible had so true a taste of Wit: she would not, however, absolutely refuse her, but evaded what she ask'd in as artful and obliging a manner as she could. But PHILECTA easily perceiv'd it was not by her means she should ever have her Curiosity satisfied, and therefore forbore repeating her request, unless sometimes to gratify her Spleen, by putting the other to the pain of inventing Excuses, which she knew she was not very ready at.

The Inclination she had before of seeing and speaking to him, now growing stronger by being oppos'd, she resolv'd to accomplish it some way or other; and DALINDA, according to custom, still continuing to inform her of all that pass'd between them, one day told her he had made her a Present of a Ticket for the MASQUERADE: A Stratagem came presently in her head, which seem'd to assure her of Success—She enquir'd in a careless manner, and so as could not be taken to have any design in it, what Hour she was to go, what Habits both were to wear, and whether they went together from her House, and were to meet at the MASQUERADE, or any other Place; and being fully inform'd of every thing she wanted to know, told her she had an Acquaintance who was the most artful Creature in the World in dressing Ladies for that Diversion; and that, if she pleased, she would send her.

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The other joyfully accepted of the Offer, being willing to appear as amiable as she could in all Dresses in the Eyes of DORIMENUS. The appointed Day and Hour arriv'd, and PHILECTA fail'd not of sending a Person to assist her in equipping her, as she had promised.—This was a Creature of her own, whom she recommended, and under the pretence of serving was to delay the time.—In the mean while, she dressed herself in a Habit, in every thing exactly the same with that which DALINDA had told her she was to wear; and being inform'd by her of the direct Hour she had appointed to meet him in, took care to be there early enough.——She soon distinguish'd the charming *Spaniard* (for it was in that Disguise that her unthinking Friend told her he was to be) and he as soon found his DALINDA (as he thought) in a neat *Indian Slave*.——He ran to her, and caught her in his Arms, (the freedom of that Place allowing that Familiarity) which she receiv'd in a manner becoming the Person he took her for, resolving still to act the Part she had begun, 'till Necessity should oblige her to confess the Counterfeit.

His Behaviour, and the tender and obliging things he said, made her know DALINDA had not boasted of the Power she had over him, without some reason; and that if he did not in reality love her, he so well feign'd the Passion, that a Woman of more Discernment than she was mistress of, might have been deceiv'd by it. But she had not an opportunity of discovering so much of his manner of Conversation as she expected. He took a sudden fancy in his head of going home, and all she could say to pre-

prevail on him to the contrary, was ineffectual : he told her he found himself a little disorder'd on the sudden, that he was certain the Noise, Heat, and Confusion of the place they were in, would be far from affording him any Relief, and that he wou'd go with her to her House, and pass the remainder of the Evening there.—He so little expected a Refusal from her, that he ordered Chairs, and had almost forc'd her into one before she recover'd Presence enough of Mind, to think what she had best do,—and in the Hurry of the Apprehension of being carry'd to DALINDA's, and all her Contrivance betray'd, pluck'd off her Mask, and let him see his Mistake.

Both stood confounded for some Moments—He, thro' surprize for what reason she had no sooner convinc'd him of it, and she, thro' the Confusion of her Thoughts, what Excuse to make for having done so.—She, however, was the first who overcame it, and assuming as gay an Air as possible;—You see, Sir, *said she*, how impossible it is for you to do any thing in private, not all your Caution to preserve the Honour of DALINDA, cou'd prevent a Woman, who suspected your Amour, from detecting you too plainly for a Denial. If 'twere possible, Madam, *answered he*, for your Curiosity to be as diligent, as your Eyes and Wit are penetrating, I should not wonder if you made discoveries of Secrets infinitely more conceal'd than this :—But, *continued he*, (taking her Hand, and kissing it in spite of her Efforts to hinder him) since, whether by Design or Chance, you are in possession of my Secret, in justice to myself, I can do no other than endeavour to be Master
of

of *Yours*, at least, so far as to know the name of my Confidant, and where I may wait on her to conjure her to preserve it.——Trust to my Generosity for that, *resumed she, struggling to get from him.* On any other Score, I will, *retorted he, holding her more fast,* but not in this, by Heaven; nor will I give you so just a cause for Ridicule, as the parting from you thus unsatisfied would be.—Nothing can be more impossible than that she wou'd have been able to have escap'd, without letting him into the whole Affair, if DALINDA had not that moment approach'd the Place.—After all the Delays and artful Impediments with which PHILECTA's Emissary had kept her from interrupting them, she was at last got there, where the the first Person she saw was her dear *Don*, employed in this manner.—As much taken up as PHILECTA was, she presently perceiv'd her, and forcing one of her Hands from him, was lucky enough to get on her Mask before the other came near enough to discover who she was.——Look round, *cry'd she,* and take care you have not a Witness of what you are doing, whose Upbraidings will be more destructive to your Peace, than any Discoveries I shall be able to make.——She had scarce finished these words, when DALINDA coming up to him, and giving him a little Blow on the Shoulder with her Fan, cry'd, 'Tis well, Sir; I find you are of too Active a Disposition to let a Moment pass without its business. The manner in which this was spoke, left him no room to doubt that this last was really DALINDA, and in the sudden surprize of being caught at such a Juncture, let go the Hand he had kept Prisoner, and PHILECTA slipt thro' the Crowd,
and

and got into a Chair without discovery :—He did not attempt to stay her, for tho' he would have almost given a Limb to have known who she was, he had more Good-Nature and Complaisance for the other, than to make any offer of pursuing her.——It is not to be doubted, but that DALINDA ask'd all those Questions which this Adventure render'd excusable; but he was as much to seek for the Meaning of it as she, and only telling her the truth of the Mistake he had been betray'd into by the likeness of their Dress, eas'd her of great part of those jealous Fears she was at first sight of them possess'd with; and pursuing the Inclination he had of going home with her, they pass'd that Night as they had done many former ones.

When PHILECTA was come home, and had the liberty of contemplating on this Affair, she was far from being so well contented with what she had done, as she imagined she shou'd have been.——Her Curiosity, or at least she yet knew so little of herself, as to imagine, it was that alone which prompted her to take these Measures, was yet unsatisfy'd—she had seen DORIMENUS, and had talk'd to him, and was convinc'd that he was a Man of fine Figure and fine Sense; she cou'd not help acknowledging also that the Tendernefs with which he accosted her while he took her for DALINDA, in part excus'd the Passion that Lady had for him,—but still she wanted to know something more, which if she had a second Opportunity of talking to him, she fancy'd she shou'd be able to find out.——She curs'd the Interruption which had broke off their Conversation, tho' it was the only means which cou'd have prevented his disco-

discovering who she was.—In fine, she was in Love, — was charm'd with him to an infinite degree, without being sensible that she was so,—and while she languish'd for a second Interview, believ'd the Uneasiness she felt, no more than the effect of a Curiosity ungratified.—Small was the Repose she took that Night, and to add to the Perturbations of her Mind, DALINDA in the Morning came to visit her; told her, she but that Moment was risen from the Arms of her Charmer, and as she us'd to do, related to her all the Passages of his Behaviour; among the rest, she told her laughing of the pleasant Mistake he had made in Addressing another Lady for her, and that he cou'd not be perswaded it was any other, 'till she appear'd in reality and undeceiv'd him. What, cry'd PHILECTA, *interrupting her*, then he did not see her Face? No, *answered the other*, most certainly he did not, for if he had, he wou'd sooner have been convinc'd of his Error, and neither have given himself the Trouble, nor been so unmannerly to a Stranger, as to have engag'd her in the manner I surpriz'd him.—You may possibly be deceived, Madam! *resumed PHILECTA, a little peevishly*, all the World allows him to be a Man of Gallantry, — and if he had seen the Lady's Face, perhaps, there might be nothing there disagreeable enough, to make him think it not worth his while to endeavour to engage her.—Lord! my Dear, *reply'd the other*, you are strangely cruel to put such things into one's head, — but I don't much regard what you say,—you are a Foe profess'd to the Sex, and will not believe there is one among them worthy of a Woman's Affection.—Not for his Constancy

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indeed,

indeed, *said* PHILECTA; and tho' I do not know DORIMENUS, I believe he has as little of that Virtue as the rest of his Specie. You wou'd be of another Opinion, *answered she*, if you had seen his Behaviour last Night,—I never saw him so Thoughtful, so Chagrin, so Dull; all I cou'd say or do, had not the power to divert him, and this for no other Reason, than because I seemed to suspect the Truth of what he told me concerning the Mistake.—It would be impossible to describe the Pleasure these words created in PHILECTA's Soul, she presently imagin'd his Melancholy proceeded from another Cause than that which he pretended, doubted not but he fretted at the hindrance she had been to his commencing an Acquaintance with a Woman who had not seemed unworthy of it, and grew more easy as she thought he grew the contrary.—They had a great deal more Chat to the same purpose, and many things that DALINDA said, PHILECTA took to her advantage, others the reverse. She was altogether unable to form any direct Judgment of his Sentiments, and Curiosity having now a new and more vigorous Incentive than before, she resolv'd to be satisfy'd, and try him to the utmost, whatever shou'd be the Consequence.—In this destructive, and to herself unquiet Disposition, did she pass some days, not knowing what Course to take to compass her Wishes, till the unwary DALINDA happening to tell her she expected him at such a time, put a Stratagem into her Head, which till then she had never thought of:—She took Pen and Paper, and counterfeiting as near as she cou'd the Character of the happy DALINDA, writ to him in this manner.

To

TO DORIMENUS.

A Relation being come out of the Country with a design to pass some days with me, makes it wholly improper for me to see you at home, but shall be glad to meet you at the appointed Hour, at the House of Mr. ——— in St. ——— Street; I have a particular Friend lodges there, enquire for PHILECTA, and you will find,

Your most Passionate

and Faithful

DALINDA.

She had play'd the Counterfeit so well, that 'twas scarce possible for the most discerning Eye to have discovered the difference of the Hand—DORIMENUS was entirely deceiv'd by it, and immediately sent an Answer by the Bearer, that he wou'd not fail to be there at the time.

Had PHILECTA ask'd herself the Question, when the Hour of his approach drew near, her beating Heart had soon inform'd her it was to something more than Curiosity she ow'd her present Agitations; but not all her good Sense, not all her former Experience of the Passion she was now again possess'd of, had yet once reminded her, that she took all this Pains for any thing more, than to triumph over the Tenaciousness of DALINDA, and to have the pleasure of railly-ing her a little for her imaginary Security——or at the most, that it proceeded from a bare liking of his Conversation, and a humour of amusing herself at a time, when she had nothing

else to do.—But as much unacquainted as she was with the true state of her own Wishes, she left nothing undone that she thought wou'd be to the advantage of her appearing well in the eyes of DORIMENUS,—her Chambermaid and her Glafs were all the Company she admitted that day,——a thousand and a thousand times were the Patches plac'd, alter'd, and replac'd,—the Position of the Curls as often chang'd,—now *this*, anon *that* Fashion she thought most becoming,——sometimes one sort of Glance, then its contrary seem'd the likeliest to attract——and she remain'd unfix'd in Determination, how she shou'd Look, or Speak, or Act, when she was told he was enquiring for her.——'Tis probable indeed, that at sight of him, she forgot all the little Arts she had been practising, and receiv'd him with an Air purely Natural; but whatever it was, it had something in it, which, as he afterwards confest, was infinitely more engaging than any thing he had ever seen.——To find in the Friend and Confidant of DALINDA, the Woman whom he had attack'd in so particular a manner at the MASQUERADE, and whom since he had seen he never ceas'd to wish for, as an Acquaintance of a different nature than what he now had reason to hope, gave him a mixture of Surprise, Joy, and Concern: He rejoiced at an opportunity of being in her Company, but was heartily vexed at the occasion, which he expected wou'd not only bring on a speedy Interruption, but also take from him the means of ever being able to address her in the manner he desir'd;—the Confusion of his Thoughts did not however deprive him of the power of making her a great many well-order'd

order'd Compliments on this unlook'd-for Happiness, which she return'd in such a fashion as confirm'd him in the opinion he had before conceiv'd of her Wit, and good Breeding.—After a pretty deal of Conversation on ordinary Subjects, PHILECTA looking on her Watch, seem'd to express some wonder that DALINDA tarry'd so long: The time, *said she*, in which she appointed to be here, is more than an hour since elaps'd; but I suppose, she is perfectly satisfied of the Strength of her Interest in the Person who waits for her, or she wou'd not run so great a Risque of disobliging him, by leaving him to Conversation, no way capable of entertaining him. Whether this Lady had any other design in speaking these words, than to prevent him from any suspicion of the Plot she had laid to bring him there, is uncertain; but they seem'd so fit a handle for him to begin a Discourse, he knew not 'till then how to bring about, that he cou'd not let it slip without having been as stupid, as he was really the reverse. I know not Madam! *answered he*, (bowing in the most respectful manner) what Excuse she will be able to make to you indeed, for imposing on your *Good-Nature* this task of Civility to a Man, whom your *Judgment* must inform you is, for many reasons, strangely unworthy of it.—For my part, the Blessing I am possess'd of by her means, wou'd be too great, did not the cause, by which it is procur'd, allay it:—Yes Charming PHILECTA, *continu'd he*, (after a little pause, and looking on her with the most tender and beseeching Air) I confess my self in this both Ambitious and Ungrateful,—tho' to be admitted to gaze on your adorable Eyes!—to listen to the Wonders of
your

your Wit!——and to have so near a view of all your Heaven of Beauties, fills my whole Soul with Joy unutterable; yet I am not content,—O! were I allow'd this privilege by your kindness,——had I but merits to deserve that favour, or did your good opinion enhance the value of what I am master of, how truly blest were my Condition!——how cou'd I ever, rapt in immortal Extasys, dwell on this Hand,—devour it with my eager Kisses, and——Here PHILECTA, who from the moment she perceiv'd the aim of his Discourse, had been kept from interrupting him only by the Confusion of her Thoughts, now recover'd presence of mind enough to prevent his doing as he said; and snatching away her Hand, Whatever good opinion I had entertain'd of you (*cry'd she*) such a Behaviour is the way to forfeit it; nor wou'd you treat me in this fashion, had you not the most indifferent one of me.—But, *added she*, (abating somewhat of that severity which she had assum'd when she began to speak) the Weakness which is too ordinarily discover'd in my Sex, in part excuses your proceeding.—I am sensible there are not a few of us who cannot be alone with one of yours, without expecting an Address of the nature you wou'd make to me.—Nay,—nay, *rejoin'd she*, (perceiving he was about to offer something in objection to what she said) I have mention'd the only undeniable reason of your Application,—there cannot be another found,—for I am certain the enamour'd DORIMENUS is too well vers'd in what will please DALINDA, to stand in need of practising his Lesson on any other Woman; or if he did, it wou'd not be her Friend PHILECTA
he

he would make his Property.——As much Courage as he usually had in these Attacks, as successful as he had ever been, he was almost at a loss how to proceed with a Lady who he found so well furnish'd with Weapons of Defence; and if he had not been inform'd by some tell-tale *Cupids* in her Eyes, which now and then flew out with tender Messages, that he had a Friend within, might probably have given over both the Hope and the Attempt of Vanquishing.

But thus embolden'd, he prosecuted his Design with all the Artifice of tempting Passion—knelt, sigh'd, begg'd, and swore——said all that the most burning, raging Love could suggest, or Wit and Eloquence find Words for—No Interruption happening (for she had order'd to be denied whoever came) Hour after Hour pass'd on in this Employment, and not a Moment flew without some new Invention to urge his Passion, and to heighten hers. She was, notwithstanding what she endur'd in the Constraint, so much on her Guard, as not to let fall even a Word that might give him hope.

She would not trust her own Power of reasoning, so far as to enter into any Argument with him, but on the score of DALINDA; and whenever he conjur'd her to pity what he felt, she reminded him what 'twas he ow'd to her who had given him the highest Proofs of Compassion.——He could say nothing to her, but what she answered with the name of DALINDA.——As the Affair was, he had indeed a nice Game to play, and it requir'd all the fine Sense and artful Sophistry he was master of, to sollicite Favours from the *one*, without appearing

ing guilty of an Ingratitude for those he had receiv'd from the *other*, which might justly render his Suit of no effect ; tho' it is very much to be wonder'd at, that that Passion which had prompted her to take so much pains to engage him, and which while he was pressing her, swell'd in her struggling Heart, and almost crack'd the Strings that held it, did not in spite of her burst out, disclose the God, and show its Force above the faint Controul of Reason.

BUT DORIMENUS was not always to triumph at first sight ; he could not find a DALINDA in PHILECTA : as she knew better how to love, she also knew better how to govern it ; and the Time being arrived, in which, to be consistent with good Manners and Decency, he must be obliged to take leave, all he could obtain from her at parting was, her Permission to wait on her again the next day ; and that only, as she pretended that she might inform him of DALINDA, who she told him she would see in the Morning, and know the Cause which had detain'd her from coming to the Appointment.

It must be only a Soul possess'd of the strictest *Virtue* and most violent *Desire*, that can form any just Idea of what the poor PHILECTA suffer'd in so exemplary a Self-denial.——Never Woman lov'd with a greater Transcendency of Passion.—Never Woman was press'd to obey the Dictates of her own Inclinations with more Subtilty, and Vigour ;——yet never Woman resisted with a superiour Fortitude.——The Pangs she endur'd, were made more sharp by a Reflection that she owed them to herself, and when she consider'd how easy, how tranquil
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her Thoughts were before she saw DORIMENUS ; it was with the severest Censure she exclaim'd against that Curiosity which had so far betray'd her.——She was now no longer insensible by what Passion she had been sway'd to with a second Interview.——She found she lov'd him with an extravagance of Dotage,——lov'd him to a degree beyond what she had felt before, even tho' the breaking it off had very near cost her her Life, and trembled to think what the Consequences might be of this second, and more violent Inclination.——She was not sure she should always be able to refuse the melting Pressures of this dangerous Charmer.——She fear'd the Effects of a Desire so wild and ungovernable——and justly doubted the Force of Reason.

What could she do,——what could she resolve, thus tortur'd, thus torn betwixt the fiercest Opposites ;——yet not even in a Thought transgressing Honour. She at last determin'd never to see him more——No, *said she to herself*, all charming as he is, tho' my Eyes can know no Joy but looking on him, nor my Ears but in Attention to his harmonious Tongue ; tho' every Sense is full of his Perfections, and have no taste for any other Pleasure, they shall no more be trusted with the fatal Transport.——Virtue, Honour, Religion, Reputation are at stake, and all cry out, *No more indulge the ruinous Desire !——Fly the destructive Graces of the lovely, the too engaging DORIMENUS——rather let me die than give a loose to a Passion so pernicious to every thing that ought to be dear or valuable.*

With this Resolution she gave a strict Charge to her Servant to say she was not at home——

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but she had no sooner spoke the Words, than a Flood of tender Passion rising in her Soul, she was about to countermand this Order.— She was not half a Minute together in the same mind—hard she thought it to deny herself so innocent a Satisfaction as the sight of him; but harder yet she found it would be, in his Presence, to contain the Passion she was possess'd of, from breaking out to his Discovery.

Reason therefore enabling her to consider that the only way to conquer was to fly; and fearing that if she should but hear his Voice, the dear-lov'd Sound might have force enough in it to shake the Resolution she had form'd, and that she should be weak enough to call him up, laid hold of the first moment of cool Consideration to put it out of her power to follow the expected Returns of her softer Emotions.— She flew out of the House, and came not home 'till late at Night;—and tho' there pass'd not one Hour in all that day, in which she was not a thousand times about to come back—yet she had still Command enough of herself, to suppress the struggling Inclination.

In the mean time the agreeable Cause of her Disquiet was far from being in perfect ease himself—he was prodigiously charm'd with her; and if the Perturbations of his Mind were less terrible than those she endur'd, they were yet more violent than those which Men ordinarily feel on the like occasion.

He had continu'd all Night in Agitations, which might very well be accounted the effects of Love; and tho' he had some reason to hope she look'd not on him with Eyes of Hate or Disdain, yet her Friendship with DALINDA, and her

her Knowledge of the Intimacy between him and that Lady, were powerful Objections against him.——But not being of a Disposition very liable to Despair, and too impatient to endure Suspence, he came prepar'd with all the Arguments his Passion and unfailing Wit could furnish him with, resolv'd to know at once what 'twas he had to expect.

To find she was abroad, after having promis'd to admit his Visit, was a Disappointment he was not arm'd against——and it gave him a greater Shock than it would done any other Man, because he was less accusom'd to meet such Treatment.——It was the first Mortification of this kind his Vanity had ever receiv'd; and had it been given by another Woman, 'tis probable would have cur'd his Passion.——But PHILECTA had got fast hold of his Heart, and this little Slight was infinitely too weak to set it free——Dispirited and altogether unfit for Conversation, he trifled away two or three Hours at a Coffee-House, then went again; but meeting the same Answer as before, grew almost mad.

He was now convinced Love had its Pains as well as Pleasures, and was as much surprized to find this Alteration in himself, as he was that there was a Woman in the World on whom he had not been able to make any visible Impression.——After indulging his Spleen the best part of the day at his own Lodgings, he went again in the Evening to her's; but she being still abroad, he could not conceal his Discontent.——He walk'd backward and forward in her Dining-Room, ask'd a thousand impertinent Questions of the Maid, and beginning to

believe it an Impossibility to see her that Night, could not leave the place without letting her know some part of the Uneasiness he sustain'd.——He desir'd Pen and Paper, which being brought him, he writ to her in this manner :

To the Cruel, but most Adorable
PHILECTA.

NOTHING could have convinced me you were not altogether divine, but the little Disposition I find in you to Mercy: In the Eye of Heaven, to be a zealous Votary, is, to be a meritorious one ; and I am certain the penetrating Eyes of my ador'd Philecta cannot but have discern'd that Quality in me——As never any Woman was created to charm like her, so never any Man had a Heart more susceptible of her Power than mine.——It is with the utmost Resignation——the utmost Pleasure I devote my whole Soul to Love and You, and beg no more than your Acceptation of the Offering——Permit me but to see you, and make your own Conditions how far I may obey the Dictates of my Passion in declaring my self

The Excellent PHILECTA'S

Everlasting Slave,

DORIMENUS.

P. S. *I will take the Liberty of waiting on you to-morrow Evening ; and since Business, or, which I much fear, some more agreeable Amusement, depriv'd me this day of the Blessing you made me hope, entreat you will have Compassion enough for the Anxieties I feel in this Disappointment, not to make me the most miserable of all created Beings, by a second, which would certainly compleat that Ruin which the first has begun.*

What became of the Soul-tortur'd PHILECTA, when she came home and read these Lines, let those unhappy Women, who have felt the Force of a Passion as violent as her's, describe——it is not in my power, any more than it is to represent, as it deserves, the never to be sufficiently admir'd Effect of her Resolution, and firm Adherence to the Rules of Virtue, in an Exigence so dangerous ! ——Tho' overwhelm'd and lost in Love and soft Desire, tho' at each thought of DORIMENUS, unusual Warmth ran thrilling thro' her Veins, her Blood beat high, and she was all o'er Pulse——tho' her whole Soul dissolv'd in tender Languishments, and for one dear, one blissful Moment she would have forgiven an Age of Life—Yet fix'd in her Determination, she chose to die, rather than yield to accept the proffer'd Joy.

To avoid what most she wish'd, and put it out of her power ever to recede from the Resolution she had form'd of never seeing him any more, she pitched on a Method very extraordinary, and what, perhaps, no Woman before her ever chose.——She did not doubt but that the same Passion which had inspir'd him to write to her in the manner he had done, would make him
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neglect no opportunity of being in her Company.—He had told her in the Postscript of his Letter, that he would come the next day, and she could not answer for herself that she would not see him——but if she should continue to be denied then, or whenever after he should make the same Attempt, yet still there was no defence against his writing ; and even if she return'd no Answer to encourage him to pursue his Designs, yet it was keeping alive a consuming Fire in her Breast, which she had hope might be extinguish'd, when there was no longer a Possibility of seeing him or hearing from him.

She rose early in the Morning, and having made what haste she could in dressing, surpriz'd DALINDA in her Bed.—I come, Madam, *said she, with an Air so wild and troubled, as spoke the Dissatisfaction of her Soul,* to relate to you a History which will afford you both Pain and Pleasure ; and when you shall hear with how much Barbarity you have been treated by those you most confided in, you will also know you have your Revenge in as exquisite a manner as your most vindictive Thoughts could wish.

Here she stop'd, either unable to utter more for the violent Emotions which just at that time could not but be suitable to the Cause, or that she expected what she would reply to words which promised something so unexpected. DALINDA, indeed, gave her not much time to pause, and having nothing but DORIMENUS in her Head, immediately fancied it must be something relating to him which PHILECTA had to reveal ; and starting up in her Bed, cry'd, What do you mean, my Dear ! have you heard any
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thing of DORIMENUS ! He is the falsest of all his perjur'd Sex, *resum'd the other, hastily*, nor am I at all behind him in Treachery and Ingratitude——But not to add to the Cruelty I have already been guilty of to you, by keeping you in Suspense, know that I love him, love him to Distraction, to the extreamest height of furious, raging Passion——that he has declared himself my everlasting Votary——and that there wants but opportunity for us to be as compleatly wicked as Falshood and the Accomplishment of loose Desire can make us.

It must be left to the Reader's Imagination to conceive what 'twas DALINDA felt in the sudden Shock of this unlook'd-for Thunder-Clap——there are no Words capable of doing Justice to the Horrors, the Perplexities which at that instant invaded her whole Soul, convuls'd all her Frame, and shook each tender Limb with Tremblings; such as for a time depriv'd her of the power of Speech. She, whose Discourse had thrown her into this Condition, was herself incapable of regarding it, feeling in her own Breast Anxieties at least equal to those she had occasioned in her's——and going on with the destructive Story, *There, cry'd she, throwing on the Bed the Letter which DORIMENUS had writ*, there, read that, and you will need but little Information how very guilty we have been.

The Sight of his well-known Hand, recall'd the fainting Spirits of the unfortunate DALINDA——she read the fatal Scroll, and by degrees coming out of that Astonishment, which had for some moments stunn'd Reflection, and suspended the most raging Passion of the Soul—
Despair,

Despair, and Jealousy, now show'd themselves in their most proper Colours, and pour'd out Curses numberless on the perfidious DORIMENUS and PHILECTA, those Undoers of her Peace! —those Betrayers of her Trust——with the most bitter Invectives——the most severe Reproaches Heart e'er conceiv'd, or Tongue e'er utter'd, did she exclaim against the Baseness of them both.——Her guilty Friend heard her with patience, nor interposed one Word in vindication either of herself, or him, whose ruinous Charms had been the Cause of all this Scene of Woe; 'till perceiving her Fury had almost spent itself in railing, she desir'd her Attention to what yet remain'd to be told of this tormenting Secret, which the other willingly complying with, she reveal'd every Circumstance of the Affair, beginning from the Measures which her Curiosity had prompted her to take, to see, and entertain the Man whose Character she had heard so much of, and concluding with the fatal Consequence, and her Resolution henceforward ever to avoid him.

She had no sooner ended, than DALINDA, as doubting the Truth of her last Words, with a Sigh, cry'd out, And can you then, PHILECTA, be so much the mistress of your Inclinations, as to maintain a Resolution so infinitely prejudicial to them.——Reason, *answer'd the other*, may certainly enable one to do a great deal; but lest it should not be sufficient of itself for my Protection, I call in the Assistance of a jealous Rival's watchful Care.——I will not promise that without your Aid I could for ever deny my self the Joy of looking on him.——Nor
would

wou'd I on any other score have made you the Confidant of my Weakness. But what method, *interrupted DALINDA*, is it in my power to take? The Heart that is once estrang'd, requires more Artifice than mine to recover. You have no cause (*reassumed PHILECTA*) to imagine your Case so desperate.——I have already told you by what Stratagems, which my Curiosity taught me, I occasion'd these two days absence, he yet believes you wou'd not receive a Visit at your own House——write to him, therefore, convince him of the contrary,——and when you see him next, there is no danger but your continued Kindness, and the appearance of my continued Scorn, and the Impossibility he will find it to entertain me, will oblige him to give over a hopeless Prosecution, and turn the whole bent of his Desires on her who has so dearly purchased them.——Besides, *added she*, if Fondness fails to engage, I leave his Letter with you, permit you to shew it him, to upbraid him with it, and if he has any spark of Pride or Resentment in him, (of both which I am much mistaken if he has not a considerable Share) he will soon hate the Woman who has expos'd him in the manner I have done to you——and the Contempt he will have for me, make him avoid my Presence, with as much Care as too much Love and Admiration obliges me to do his. With this Advice and the Assurance, that whatever she suffered in so terrible a Constraint, she never wou'd consent to see him more, PHILECTA left her more at ease than she had been at the beginning of her Discourse, nor was she herself without some secret Satisfaction that she had perform'd the cruel Task she set

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herself,

herself, and been severely just to Virtue—
and in the midst of all those Agonies which
arise from struggling Nature unconquer'd tho'
o'erpower'd, felt a kind of gloomy Transport
that she had past the fiery Tryal, and secured
her Honour from all the Attacks of Love and
her own Wishes.

PHILETICA was no sooner gone, than DALINDA
went about to follow the Advice she had given
her, and reserving her Reproaches that they
might break out with the greater fury when she
saw him, employ'd her Pen to DORIMENUS in
this manner :

To the most Charming of his Sex, the
Accomplish'd **DORIMENUS**.

*ALL Obstacles being now remov'd, I beg to see
my Angel this evening about five at my own
House, where beside the grand Business of my Life,
Love, I have another Affair to communicate con-
cerning the occasion of my not meeting the Soul of
all my Joys the other day at PHILECTA'S.—Fail
not to come; if you would have me think you yet have
that Tenderness you so often have made Professions
of, to*

Your most Passionate and
Ever Faithful

DALINDA.

This Billet was far from being receive dwith
that welcome from DORIMENUS, which those
from her were accustomed to meet.—He
had

had again been to visit PHILECTA, and was again disappointed in his hope of seeing her; which, together with having no Answer to the Letter he had left for her the day before, put him in so ill an Humour, that he was entirely unfit for any Conversation, much more for an Amorous one. He liked PHILECTA too well, to like any other Woman at all; and the Opinion he had, that it was for the sake of DALINDA he had found the other so deaf to his Entreaties, render'd her, of all her Sex, the least capable of pleasing him.—Altogether indifferent, therefore, how she might take it, he return'd an answer of Excuse, but in so cold and careless a Stile, that if she had been wholly ignorant of his new Passion, she might easily have perceiv'd something had happened to the ruin of her Hopes.

To the Agreeable DALINDA.

I Am extreamly sorry that Business of the greatest Consequence makes it impossible for me to see you at the time you mention.—When I have dispatch'd that, I shall gladly attend you, and renew those Tenderneſſes, which will be ever a pleasure to him, who is,

Sincerely Yours

DORIMENUS.

P. S. *I fear it will be some days before I can be happy enough to see you.*

'Tis utterly impossible to represent with what affliction she receiv'd so manifest a Proof, that she no longer had a place in the Affection of DORIMENUS; for tho' by what she heard from PHILECTA, and the sight of his Letter to her, she was enough convinc'd of his Insincerity and Mutability of Temper, yet she was far from believing she had entirely lost him: but she now cou'd think no other. — She read the vexatious Billet over and over, and cou'd find in it nothing that had the appearance of Love, — it seem'd scarce Complaisant, and the bitter Anguish of her Soul vented itself in Complaining, such as had he been Witness of (possess'd as he was with the most violent Passion for another) he must have pity'd, and perhaps, reliev'd the sad Despair which had occasioned them.

The Tempest of her Grief a little over, and the Power of Consideration return'd, she began to think what was best for her to do, either to oblige him to a Return of Kindness, or to acknowledge himself as false and as ungrateful as he had sworn to be the contrary. Full of her Wrongs, therefore, and impatient to upbraid him, she took his Letter to PHILECTA, and sent it to him under a Cover, in which she writ these Lines:

To the Thankless, but Ever-Dear
DORIMENUS.

SINCE you have no leisure Moments to throw away on a Woman, whom you no longer love, I send you enclosed this Letter, that you may know I am
not

not insensible of the reason of your Absence. — PHILECTA, I confess, has Charms to create the most violent Passion; but I can never be brought to acknowledge, that all she is possesst of, were they infinitely superior to what they are, can be an excuse for Falshood and Ingratitude to another: — I need not tell you with what a Fervency of tender Passion I have lov'd you, my Actions have sufficiently convinc'd you of that Truth; but when I declare, that I do still love you, love you with the same unbated Fondness as before I knew your Crime! I need appeal no farther, than to your own Soul to judge, whether or not I give a Proof of Constancy and forgiving Tenderness, which the World cannot produce frequent Examples of — By Heaven! you are, even in Falshood, dearer to me than my Life, or than every thing the World calls valuable. — Return then, thou lovely Ingrate! Thou charming Destroyer of my Peace, return! — again make me happy in those transporting Joys, which only you have power to give, and none but those, who love like me, are capable of receiving — Be but half as ready to Accept a Pardon, as I am to Afford it, and I shall still be blest; — nor will I ever repeat what's past, unless to raise our Bliss, by a remembrance and fond regretting of this little Interval. — Hasten to my Arms! my eager, my expecting Arms! and let me there unfold what 'tis I wish, what 'tis I languish for: amidst that Rapture, I can alone unfold how much, — how passionately, — how much beyond the reach of Words, I am,

My Adored DORIMENUS's

Most Faithfully Devoted

DALINDA

P. S.

P. S. I beg, as tho' for Life, to see you this Night, I know you are enough Master of your own time to grant me this request, and if refused, shall be certain, that want of Inclination is my only Enemy—Once more, my Angel, adieu.

Let any of that Sex (of which I believe there are but few who have not plurality of Engagements) form to themselves, an Idea of what DORIMENUS felt in so surprizing a Turn,—to see his own Letter, containing the most passionate Declaration of Love to one Woman, in the hands of another, whom he had also pretended to love, to the same violent degree ;—and at the same time, to find so much forgiving Goodness, where he cou'd have expected only Rage and Resentment,—to be press'd beyond Denial to come and receive that Pardon, which he was conscious of being far from meriting :—All this was sufficient to excite in him the utmost extreams of Astonishment, of Gratitude, and of Shame for so unexampl'd a Generosity, and Obligements, he neither had it in his power to deserve or to requite ;—but of all the various Agitations he was seiz'd with, there was none gave him half that pain, as the Apprehension, that it cou'd be by no other means than herself, that his Letter to PHILECTA had been expos'd to DALLIDA.—Her refusing to admit his Visits, very much strengthen'd this Opinion. He now began to be assur'd, that all his Attempts on that Lady wou'd be fruitless; and that either to gratify her Sex's Vanity, and fond to boast her Power, or in obedience to the Rules of a Friendship pretty uncommon, (especially among Women) she had made a Sacrifice of his Pretensions.

There

There was, indeed, nothing unnatural in this Supposition, and he was humbled beyond expression to find he had been so much deceived in the Language of the Eyes, which he was us'd to imagine he had a perfect understanding in, and which had seem'd to tell him, there was something in the Soul of that Lady which pleaded strongly in his behalf. — But resolv'd to be convinc'd, and not knowing any way to be so, but by going to DALINDA, chose, rather to endure all the just Reproaches he must expect, from a Woman treated in the Manner he had done her, than endure one Hour an Uncertainty so perplexing. — He, therefore, after the Messenger had waited a long time the Result of his Determination, ordered him to let the Lady, who sent him, know, he wou'd without fail wait on her at the time she desir'd.

At length, the so much wish'd for Hour by both (tho' for different Reasons) was arriv'd, and the over-joy'd DALINDA receiving him in a manner which favour'd neither of Jealousy nor Indignation, oblig'd him to return the Caresses she gave him, with a seeming Equality of Tenderness. — She kept the Promise she had made him, and forbore any Upbraidings; if she mentioned PHILECTA at all, it was in such a manner as he could not tax her with ill Humour, and had she been as cautious for her own Interest, as she was to offend him, she might perhaps have been happy in his renew'd Endearments; but on his mentioning that Lady, and speaking some few half Sentences, which he thought might excite her Curiosity, eas'd his own, by being inform'd of the whole Affair. — The poor unthinking Open-hearted Fair, believing him now all her own,

own, had no reserve, related to him every Particular of her Conversation with PHILECTA, and let him know, that that Lady had not disclos'd this Secret to her out of Contempt or Dislike of him, who had address'd her, but out of too great a Tenderness and violent Affection.——What could be more transporting to the Soul of DORIMENUS than such a Discovery? What cou'd be more prejudicial to her, who made it?——All the Charms of PHILECTA now rise to his Idea, with greater force than ever——he could not help loving her, for the force of her Passion for him; but he perfectly ador'd her, for the strength of a Resolution so uncommon——he found Charms in her refusals, which not the utmost Condescensions of any other Woman cou'd afford.——He thought the Conquest of a Heart like hers, worthy the utmost assiduity; and since he was assur'd he had a Friend so powerful as Inclination, to plead in his behalf, was resolv'd never to give over till he had vanquish'd all Opposers.—He grew prodigiously thoughtful, after she had made an end of the Narrative, nor was it in her power to stay him.——He long'd to be alone, to indulge Contemplation.——He languish'd to be happy in Idea, with the now more than ever adorable PHILECTA, and to invent some means, by which he might overcome her scrupulous Virtue, and become in reality as blest, as Love confess'd and rewarded wou'd make him. He profess'd however as much as was necessary, to make DALINDA believe he had no Wishes but what were center'd in the Possession of her, and thinking it no Sin to throw in two or three Oaths to confirm her belief, took his leave, with a Promise to return the next day. She, perfectly satisfy'd with what he said,

said, suffer'd him to go without feeling any ominous Emotions.

I will not trouble my Reader with any repetition of what his Thoughts were that Night, 'tis easy to believe they were not fill'd with very violent Perturbations.—He was perfectly convinc'd, that the Woman, who of all the World he believed most worthy his Esteem, lov'd him with a Passion, which he cou'd not have hoped; and as he knew there was nothing wanting but his Presence, to banish all the Guards which Virtue rais'd in opposition to his Desires,—he resolv'd, some way or other, to get to the Speech of her. The Morning no sooner broke than he arose, and dressing himself, went once more to the House where PHILECTA lodg'd—designing to beg Permission for a moment's Conversation; but Love, and Fortune befriending him on this occasion, he found the Door open, and eager of Access, stay'd not till any body should come to answer his Demand, but walking gently in, and going up Stairs with the same Precaution, got to the Apartment of the Charmer, without being observed.—The Door was only shut to; and in his attempting to knock, it flew open, and admitted the impatient Lover.—He made no scruple of running immediately to the Chamber.—She was not yet risen, and had but that moment waked from a most pleasing Dream, of which he was the Subject: Imagination, always a Friend to Love, had given her, in *Sleep*, a full Idea of those Joys, which, when *Awake*, she durst not allow herself to think of. The rapturous Image left an unusual Languishment in her Eyes, they had nothing of their wonted Austerity remaining, and seem'd rather to invite

than forbid the adventurous Gazer, who, in spite of his natural Boldness, was a little dash'd at his first Entrance.—He was two or three moments in the Room before she saw or heard him, but the agreeable Posture in which she lay, and which disclos'd to him Beauties, which her Dress had conceal'd, gave him Agitations too violent to permit him to continue long at the distance he then was ;——he made but one step to the Bed-side, and throwing himself on his knees, by that beseeching Posture endeavour'd to assure her he came not on any dishonourable Design.—She gave a little shriek at first sight of him, but not happening to be heard by any in the House, no interruption ensu'd, and he had all the Opportunity he cou'd wish, to persuade her she had no cause to fear his presence.—Her Soul was at this unguarded hour, too much dissolv'd, to permit her to assume any part of that Severity with which she had treated him, when last he entertain'd her :——Yet, trembling, for the Consequence of this Visit, she intreated him to withdraw into the next Room, assuring him she wou'd there listen to all he had to say.—But he too well understood the Advantage he was possess'd of, to let it slip; and instead of retiring, drew by degrees nearer, and nearer, to the tempting Scene, till he was too close to be repuls'd without having taken some part of the Satisfaction his Passion required:——She cou'd not hinder him from kissing and embracing her,——from feasting his impatient Eyes with every naked Charm about her,——from roving o'er them with his glowing Hands, with all the unlimited Freedom of luxurious Fondness, and at last, amidst Delight and Pain,

Pain, a Rack of Extasy on both sides, the more faintly denying, he more vigorously pressing, half yielding, half reluctant, she was wholly lost,—all her boasted Reason,—all her forceful Resolution,—all the Precautions of so many days, in one tumultuous Moment were o'ercome,—Love triumph'd over all, and revel'd in the Spoils of Honour.—The difficulty with which DORIMENUS had gain'd this Conquest, enhanc'd the Value; and the Restraint which PHILECTA had put on her Inclinations, made her now give a greater loose to them: which puts me in mind of what a late celebrated Author says on the like occasion;

*She that so fiercely can resist Desire,
With double Rage will love, when Raptures fire.*

And 'tis certain, when once a Woman of *Virtue* falls a Victim to *Love*, she is by as many degrees more vigorous in the *Gratification* of her Passion, as she was in her Efforts to *Overcome* it.

The Transport over, the Conquest fully secured, the happy Lover was now easily persuaded to go into the next Room, and the yet Unrepenting Fair rung her Bell for her Maid, to assist her in getting out of Bed.—They pass the remainder of that day together, and in the Intervals of their Endearments, beguil'd the hours in Discourses on the various Turns, which had happen'd in the short time of their Acquaintance, and by what strange and extraordinary means each had arriv'd at the Point they now were at.

For about a Week, never any two People more indulg'd themselves in guilty Pleasures—they scarce were ever asunder in that time;

DORIMENUS cou'd not live without PHILECTA, nor PHILECTA without DORIMENUS; both abandon'd all other Conversation, and found nothing Agreeable, nothing Charming, but in each other: He thought all he cou'd do too little to merit the Favour of a Woman qualified like her, and she imagin'd she cou'd never enough requite a Constancy and Gratitude so uncommon,—— each made it their whole Study to oblige the other, and there wanted but a certainty of its being permanent, to render their Condition a kind of Heaven on Earth.

But all this while, what were the Anxieties of poor DALINDA, what did she not sustain, rack'd with a fruitless Expectation,——tortur'd with the worst Furys of the Soul, Suspence and Jealousy;——and notwithstanding all her endeavours, altogether unable to find out the cause of this Disappointment of her so lately elevated Hopes, in vain she writ, in vain she sent to DORIMENUS. He had neither the least remains of Inclination to visit her, nor time to make Excuses for his absence,——his whole Soul and all his Moments were elsewhere devoted,——he was now all PHILECTA's, as much as a Man of his Temper cou'd be,——and the forsaken Lady felt, in the Impossibility of finding out the Reason of his Change of Behaviour, Disquietudes almost equal to those the loss of him occasion'd.——The manner in which PHILECTA had discover'd the Declaration he had made her, and the Tenderness she cou'd not avoid feeling for him, made her far from suspecting what had hap'n'd between them afterward; nor would she ever have had it in her thoughts, that it was for her sake she was treated in this manner, if an

Acci-

Accident had not call'd her to visit, on some Business, a Relation, who liv'd on the other side the *Thames*. The House she was at, was the very next to one eminent for the Pleasure of its Situation, and fine Gardens; by a chance, unlucky to the Peace of those she spy'd, she look'd out of a Window, which had the command of part of the Walks, and saw her Ungrateful DORIMENUS, and, what amaz'd her more, PHILECTA with him.—The sudden Rage which invaded her at so unexpected, and so shocking a Discovery, left no room for Discretion to interpose: She flew immediately out of the House she then was in, and into the Garden where they still continued, with only a little alteration of Posture; for as before she had only barely seen they were together, without any other Reason to believe them guilty, than that they were in a place so remote from any other Company; she now found them in an Arbour, he lying carelessly down on a Carpet spread on the Floor, with his Head on her Lap as she was sitting by him, she had one of her Hands fast grasped in his, and with the other she seem'd to toy, and stroke his Face and Breast.—'Tis hard to say, whether Amazement or Indignation had the greatest share in her Breast, but 'tis easy to believe the Violence of both left no room for Consideration,—the Lovers lost in the pleasing Contemplation of each other's Charms, nor saw, nor heard her, till running to the place where they were, and catching hold of PHILECTA,—'Tis well, Madam! *she cry'd*, is this your boasted Virtue?—Your Reserve?—False, False Woman!—And you, (*continued she, turning to DORIMENUS*) Ungrateful, and most perjur'd of all

all your deceiving Sex, what Excuse can'st thou now make, — by what Artifices, by what Insinuations can'st thou again betray my easy Nature? — Thou cool Designer! What can thy subtil-working Wit invent, to clear thy Honour or PHILECTA'S Innocence? — You both are known, detected, and be assured the Affair shall be no Secret, — I will at least have the satisfaction of Revenge. — She had railed on, if DORIMENUS, who by this time had recovered himself from the Surprise of her first Appearance, had not put a little stop to the career of her Tongue by these words: — Well, Madam, (*said he to her in an angry Accent*) what you suspect, you may if you please divulge, but I wou'd have you consider well before you talk too much — remember that DALINDA can suspect nothing of PHILECTA, but what PHILECTA is certain of DALINDA. — I would have you, therefore, be tender of this Lady's Honour, as you wou'd preserve your own. — As for my own part, I will at any other time reply to your Upbraidings, but at present, you appear too warm for Argument. — He said no more, but taking PHILECTA, who was almost dead with shame, by the Hand, and leading her with all possible speed to the Water-side, where a Boat waited for them, left the forsaken Fair to utter her Complaining to the unregarding Winds.

She was as good as her word however, — the Adventure thro' her means became the Chat of the whole Town, and PHILECTA suffered a great deal from the Admonitions of her Relations and Friends — all who had any concern for her Reputation, advised her to break off her Acquaintance with him, but that was a task
not

not so easy to be accomplish'd as they imagin'd——she cou'd sooner have forgone her Life than his Conversation, and 'tis impossible for any thing to be more exposed than the Affair between them.

But this was not the worst part of her Misfortune; an unexpected Occasion hap'ned to call him into the Country soon after, and tho' he took leave of her with all the tender Protestations imaginable, an Overture of Marriage being there made him with a very agreeable Lady, 'tis thought he will easily be brought to accept it.—PHILECTA has heard the News, and to increase her Misfortune, finds herself with Child——the Agonies she now sustains in a too late Repentance, are not to be describ'd. Undone in all which ought to be valuable, she curses the undoing Transport she so lately blest,——and is sufficiently convinc'd how infinitely to blame she was, in indulging a Curiosity which proved so fatal to her Virtue, her Reputation, and her Peace of Mind; and which, 'tis highly probable, will in a short time be found so to her Life.

F I N I S.

